At Brooklyn Public Library, we often say our libraries are about people—the librarians and public service staff who help patrons discover their interests and reach their potential every day. In this issue of Off the Shelf you will meet two extraordinary, award-winning staff members who represent the very best of BPL. You will read about Bard at BPL, a groundbreaking program that offers a liberal arts degree, here in the Library, to those who have been previously excluded from higher education. And we hope you will marvel at the dynamism and breadth of our cultural programming this season. In every neighborhood BPL offers Brooklynites a place to do their best thinking and creating.

Linda E. Johnson
President & CEO

Brooklyn Public Library would like to offer its sincere thanks to all the library lovers who spoke up for our branches throughout this year’s annual budget process. This year’s campaign showed us the high level of commitment and solidarity that exists for our libraries from the community and from our representatives. So many of you took action online, made phone calls and attended rallies. You showed up to hearings and helped BPL set a record high of over 13,000 emails, 500 letters, 400 postcards and hundreds of calls and tweets on behalf of the Library. Your voices were heard—and library funding across the city was increased! The process began with the Library facing significant budget cuts—but they were reversed and in the end, thanks to all your advocacy, BPL’s operating funds were increased by $9.2 million, ensuring the continuation of essential services to everyone who walks through our doors, six-day-a-week service, increased collections, and expanded programming to meet the growing needs of the neighborhoods we serve. To address our capital infrastructure needs, $42 million was allocated for BPL, including $25 million toward the renovation of our flagship Central Library. We are especially grateful to our elected officials including Mayor Bill de Blasio, Speaker Corey Johnson, Finance Chair Daniel Dromm, Library Chair Jimmy Van Bramer, the Brooklyn Delegation and the entire NY City Council for their continuing support. Together, New York City’s elected leaders are ensuring that when New Yorkers visit their libraries, they will continue to find a home for self-improvement, an engine for civic engagement and a pillar of inclusion for all.

WE DID IT!

Cover: one of seven new murals installed at Central Library’s Youth Wing, created by leading children’s book illustrators. Pictured: Stephen Savage.

All photos, unless indicated, by Gregg Richards.
BKLYN BOOKMATCH, the Library’s popular readers’ advisory service, celebrated its fifth anniversary this year. However, this isn’t the Library’s first foray into the world of creating booklists. In the Brooklyn Collection, BPL’s premier local history archive, visitors can discover booklists created and published by the Library dating back to 1886! These lists cover a range of topics including novels to read for pleasure for both adults and children, books to help discover new hobbies, as well as lists to help educate the public on various social and political issues. Examples include: America Is Many People — a book list to celebrate the diversity of the people of New York City; Live and Let Live — a reading list created to accompany an exhibit commemorating the tenth anniversary of the New York State Law Against Discrimination; and Read—Then Vote! — a list of books to peruse before voting in the 1956 election. Librarians continue to assemble these lists to help showcase the wide range of materials in our collections.

GIVE THE GIFT OF DISCOVERY

Consider a legacy gift to Brooklyn Public Library in your estate plan. Remembering Brooklyn Public Library as a beneficiary in your will, trust or retirement plan ensures your legacy while providing for the Library’s future.

To learn more about including Brooklyn Public Library in your estate plan and become a member of the Ingersoll Circle, the Library’s planned giving society, please contact Lauren Arana, Director of Individual Giving, at 718.230.2009 or larana@bklynlibrary.org.

To learn more visit bklynlibrary.org/blogs/brooklynology
Bard at BPL

BPL has long been committed to helping individuals from all walks of life gain access to information and education to help empower themselves both personally and professionally. A new addition to the Library’s roster of educational opportunities is Bard at BPL, an associate’s degree program created in partnership with Bard College. The program—which is completely free for students—targets individuals who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend a liberal arts college. These include nontraditional students who have been deterred, discouraged or excluded from higher education. Through the program, students take college-level liberal arts courses that are held at Central Library, eventually earning a liberal arts associate’s degree. In its first year, the program has already admitted a total of 56 students. From a ‘zine created by current Bard at BPL students entitled Sirens: Voices from the Void comes this assertion: “Educating those who have been marginalized seems to be a revolutionary act, even in the age of self-driving vehicles and smartphones. This act is not simply in allowing access to quality education but in a new approach to education. As the first cohort of Bard Microcollege at Brooklyn Public Library, we are proud to be part of a new approach to learning.”

Classes are conducted as they would be in a traditional school setting, but students are also immersed in the Library’s unique environment of cultural curiosity and self-directed learning. Additionally, students benefit from their immediate proximity to the significant resources of the Library’s collections and staff. “This program is the logical next step in the Library’s commitment to providing New Yorkers with the highest quality academic resources, at every point of their lives and at absolutely no cost,” said Linda Johnson, BPL’s President & CEO.

To learn more visit microcollege.bard.edu

Bard at BPL is generously supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation with additional support for the 2018-19 academic year provided by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.
often developing friendships that extend outside of BPL’s walls. Conducting programs at the Library also fosters engagement with members of all ages from the community. Participants have shared that they prefer attending programs at BPL, rather than at a senior center, specifically because of the diversity of individuals they encounter. They also benefit from the wide range of additional BPL branch programs and services available to them, including free computer access, collections materials and community-focused events.

The Sills Family Foundation, based in New York City, has supported BPL’s Creative Aging programs since 2013. In the words of Foundation trustee Deborah Iarussi, “The Sills Family Foundation has been delighted to offer long-term support to the Creative Aging program at BPL. We believe strongly in the value of maintaining connections and opportunities for creativity throughout the aging process. We have been able to witness firsthand the positive impact of the Creative Aging program and hope to remain partners for many years to come!”

BPL’s Creative Aging programming, serving over 600 older adults each year, is a perfect example of how the philosophy noted above is infused throughout the organization. In the words of one of our patrons, “The program helps me not only improve my creative expression with the teacher’s help but also stimulate my brain. If I was staying home I wouldn’t learn all these things.”

Creative Aging provides beginners and experienced individuals with arts instruction in a variety of disciplines including watercolor, drawing, poetry and collage, memoir writing, calligraphy and Chinese brush painting, jewelry making, soap carving, textile design and much more. As a recent participant noted, “This class has reinvigorated and renewed my interest in poetry.” Experienced teaching artists typically lead 15-25 students in weekly two-hour classes over eight weeks concluding with a celebratory culminating performance or exhibition where participants share their finished work with friends, family and other library visitors.

BPL programs such as Creative Aging are also designed to help support community building, providing older patrons with opportunities to interact with their peers in a low-stress environment. We are delighted to announce the Shortlist for this year’s Brooklyn Public Library Literary Prize, presented by the Brooklyn Eagles. The works nominated for the Shortlist were reviewed and chosen by a committee of BPL librarians from across the borough. Likewise, the winners will be selected by a jury of BPL librarians with the results announced in November 2019. The Prize, generously underwritten by The Peck Stacpoole Foundation, with additional support from City Point, is awarded annually to a writer in each of two categories: Nonfiction and Fiction & Poetry. The winners will be celebrated on November 8 at the Brooklyn Classic at Park Slope Library.

For more information visit bklynlib.org/classic

In addition to the Sills Family Foundation, 2018-2019 Creative Aging programs were supported by the National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health, Rose M. Badgeley Residuary Charitable Trust, Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Apple Bank, Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, Laura B. Vogler Foundation, Festa Family, and several BPL Friends Groups and volunteers.
The Hate U Give
by Angie Thomas
For Gryffindors: 16-year-old Starr moves between two worlds: rich and poor. The uneasy balance is shattered when her childhood best friend is shot by police.

Dragon Pearl
by Yoon Ha Lee
For Slytherins: 13-year-old Min comes from a long line of fox spirits, but to keep the family safe, Min’s mother insists that none of them use any fox-magic.

Nimona
by Noelle Stevenson
For Slytherins: Nemeses! Dragons! Science! Symbolism! All these and more await in this brilliantly subversive, sharply irreverent epic from Noelle Stevenson.

The Storm Runner
by Jennifer Cervantes
For Gryffindors: Zane has always enjoyed exploring the dormant volcano near his home. What Zane doesn’t know is that the volcano is a gateway to another world!

Red, White & Royal Blue
by Casey McQuiston
For Hufflepuffs: A romantic comedy in which First Son Alex falls for Prince Henry of Wales, but an international incident forces them to pretend to be best friends.

Akata Witch
by Nnedi Okorafor
For Ravenclaws: Now living in Nigeria, 12-year-old albino New Yorker Sunny is plunged into the world of the Leopard People, where your worst defect becomes your greatest asset.

Red, White & Royal Blue
by Casey McQuiston
For Hufflepuffs: A romantic comedy in which First Son Alex falls for Prince Henry of Wales, but an international incident forces them to pretend to be best friends.

A Boy Called Bat
by Elana Arnold
For Hufflepuffs: For Bixby (nicknamed Bat), life is full of surprises — like when Bat’s mom, a veterinarian, brings home a baby skunk to care for.

This past August, Brooklyn Public Library’s BookMatch service celebrated its fifth anniversary. BookMatch is a readers’ advisory service that uses what readers like (and dislike) to create customized reading recommendations based on the interests or needs of patrons. This particular list was created to celebrate Harry Potter’s birthday this past July.
AWARDS RECOGNIZE OUTSTANDING LIBRARY SERVICE

IT’S NO SECRET THAT BPL’S STAFF IS ONE OF THE LIBRARY’S GREATEST RESOURCES. There are over 1,000 dedicated individuals working to serve our patrons, provide programs and keep our many branches running. To highlight individual achievements, BPL offers two annual staff awards. The Dr. Lucille C. Thomas Award for Excellence in Librarianship is awarded to a librarian who provides exemplary service to the public and upholds the highest ideals of the profession. The award is named for Dr. Thomas, a longtime BPL Trustee and the first African American to serve as president of both the New York Library Association and the New York City School Librarians Association. The Feder Leonard Family Award for Excellence in Service to the Library’s Public, inaugurated in 2019, was established by the Feder Leonard family to recognize non-librarian staff who have done outstanding work in advancing and strengthening BPL’s services to the people of Brooklyn. Both prizes, awarded in June, are made via peer nominations, making this recognition especially meaningful to recipients.

Dr. Lucille Cole Thomas (October 1, 1921 – June 23, 2019) started her career as a school teacher in Macon, GA. In 1955, after desegregation, she and her husband moved to Brooklyn, where she worked as a librarian at BPL while also earning an MA in English from New York University and an MLS from Columbia University.

Brookynites Leslie Feder and Garrick Leonard are following a family tradition in creating the Feder Leonard Family Award: there are awards established at the New York Public Library in honor of Leslie’s parents, Ruth and Arthur Feder and grandmother, Bertha Franklin Feder.

This year, the Dr. Lucille C. Thomas Award for Excellence in Librarianship was awarded to Yosenex Orenjo, a Young Adult Librarian at Stone Avenue Library. Yosenex has worked at Stone Avenue since 2017. Raised in Brownsville, he returned to the neighborhood after completing his education in order to give back to his community. In working with the teens of Brownsville, he has become an advocate for a population that is often marginalized by society. He has made the branch a haven for local youth, serving as an educator, mentor, confidant and friend. Capitalizing on his interests in Japanese anime and gaming, he has created and runs weekly classes on gaming, Dungeons & Dragons, anime and Japanese language. Thanks to his charisma and ability to engage, Stone Avenue has become one of BPL’s top five branches for Young Adult program attendance.

The winner of the first annual Feder Leonard Family Award for Excellence in Service to the Library’s Public was Nurys Pimentel, the Library Circulation Supervisor at Red Hook Library. Nurys has been with BPL for over 18 years. Starting as a part-time administrator, she was promoted to Technical Resource Specialist (assisting patrons with computer-related issues) before taking on her current position as Library Circulation Supervisor. Having grown up in Red Hook, she has relished the opportunity to give back to her community. Her coworkers describe her as nurturing, funny and inspirational and they admire her personal connection with the public. She is always setting books aside for her regular patrons. “I thought of you when this book came in!” is her common greeting. According to a peer, all of Red Hook seems to know and love Nurys.
'TIL VICTORY IS WON: 400 YEARS OF MAKING REVOLUTION AND INVENTING UTOPIA
Saturday, October 26, 7 pm to 12 am / Central Library
A teach-in at the Library observing the 400th anniversary of the arrival of enslaved Africans to the shores of Jamestown, Virginia. Over the course of five hours, delve into American and trans-Atlantic history from 1619 to the present and engage with historical facts while learning more about their profound ramifications on this country. Co-curated by Brian Tate.

View the full program and RSVP at bklynlib.org/TilVictory

AMITAV GHOSH ON GUN ISLAND
Thursday, Oct. 3, 7:30 pm
Dweck Center
From the award-winning author of the bestselling epic Ibis trilogy comes a globe-trotting, folkloric adventure novel about family and heritage.

SAMANTHA POWER ON THE EDUCATION OF AN IDEALIST
Monday, Oct. 21, 7 pm
Grand Lobby
Pulitzer Prize-winner Samantha Power offers an urgent response to the question, “What can one person do?”

TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS ON EROSION: ESSAYS OF UNDOING
Friday, Nov. 8, 7:30 pm
Dweck Center
Fierce, timely and unsettling essays from one of our most impassioned defenders of public lands.

MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY: LAURIE ANDERSON
Sunday, Nov. 3, 7 pm
Grand Lobby
A biannual series, Message from the Library is a meaningful dialogue about today’s most precarious issues.

THE REVIEW PANEL
Tuesday, Oct. 1, 7 pm
Dweck Center
Wednesday, Nov. 6, 7 pm
Dweck Center
Leading art critics join moderator David Cohen in lively debate about current exhibitions around the five boroughs. Presented in association with Artcritical.

BEAUTIFUL WORDS ARE SUBVERSIVE
October 28, 2019–January 5, 2020
Central Library
An exploration of language, readings and inscribed meanings, with a focus on Zimbabwean and African diasporic literatures, curated by Black Chalk & Co.

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THE REVIEW PANEL

BEAUTIFUL WORDS ARE SUBVERSIVE

OFF THE SHELF FALL 2019
EVENTS FOR YOUTH & FAMILIES

SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK BY PLAZA THEATRICAL PRODUCTION
Saturday, Oct. 19, 1 pm
Dweck Center
A pop culture phenomenon comes to the musical stage in Schoolhouse Rock Live!

MEET THE AUTHOR: ANGIE THOMAS
Friday, Oct. 25, 7 pm
Grand Lobby
Powerhouse young adult author Angie Thomas joins us to discuss themes from her bestselling novels.

HOT PEAS ‘N BUTTER LIVE!
Saturday, Oct. 26, 1 pm
Dweck Center
The award-winning family music band wows young audiences with their interactive roots music from around the world.

CALPULLI COMMUNITY CELEBRATES DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS (DAY OF THE DEAD)
Saturday, Nov. 2, 1 pm
Dweck Center
Join young dancers from Calpulli Community as they perform to festive songs.

JUNO VALENTINE AND THE FANTASTIC FASHION ADVENTURE
BY EVA CHEN
Saturday, Nov. 9, 1 pm
Dweck Center
BPL and Stories Bookshop are thrilled to present an afternoon of fun and fashion for families.

THE MONSTER WHO ATE MY PEAS BY ARTSPower
Saturday, Nov. 16, 1 pm
Dweck Center
ArtsPower’s musical tells the funny, poignant story of a young boy who doesn’t want to eat his peas.

BOOK LAUNCH
SOFIA VALDEZ, FUTURE PREZ BY ANDREA BEATY
Tuesday, Dec. 3, 6 pm
Dweck Center
Did you hear? There’s a new Questioneer! Acclaimed author Andrea Beaty and illustrator David Roberts join forces once again for the latest addition to their bestselling Questioneer series, Sofia Valdez, Future Prez.

JAMES RANSOME: COUNTRY ROADS, CITY STREETS
October 1, 2019–January 7, 2020
Youth Wing
BPL celebrates the sweeping output of award-winning book illustrator James Ransome with over 40 original works of collage, acrylic and oil painting.

CLASSICAL INTERLUDES
Sundays at 4 pm
Dweck Center
Formosa Quartet
Oct. 27
Bohemian Trio
Nov. 10
Carnegie Hall Citywide: Catalyst Quartet
Nov. 17
Turtle Island Quartet
Nov. 24
BPL Chamber Players
Dec. 15

For complete listings visit: bklynlibrary.org/bpl-presents

CURTIS ON TOUR:
VERA QUARTET AND PIANIST MENG-CHIENG LIU
Tuesday, Nov. 12, 7 pm
Dweck Center
Curtis on Tour co-presents the Vera Quartet with guest Meng-Chieh Liu.

JACQUELINE WOODSON ON RED AT THE BONE
Tuesday, Nov. 19, 7:30 pm
Dweck Center
An extraordinary new novel about the influence of history on a contemporary family, from the New York Times-bestselling and National Book Award-winning author.

STOMP, CLAP & SING
Tuesdays at 11 am
Dweck Center
Sunny Songsters
Oct. 8
Fiddle Foxes
Oct. 22
Music with Marc: Around the World and Back Again!
Nov. 5
Silly Jazz & Camille
Nov. 19
Little Maestros
Dec. 3

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Dec. 3

JACQUELINE WOODSON ON RED AT THE BONE
Saturday, Oct. 5, 1 pm
Dweck Center
Mister G’s spirited, bilingual performances foster cross-cultural connections.

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN’S FILM FESTIVAL: KID FLICKS ONE
Saturday, Oct. 12, 1 pm
Dweck Center
Fun, clever stories of growth and transformation.
Ages 3–7.

A BILINGUAL FAMILY CONCERT WITH MISTER G
Saturday, Oct. 5, 1 pm
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Fun, clever stories of growth and transformation.
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SILENT MOVIE MATINEE
Sundays at 12 noon, doors open at 11:30 am
Dweck Center
The Phantom of the Opera (1925/1929)
Oct. 13
The Extra Girl (1923)
Nov. 10
The Informer (1929)
Dec. 15

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